

# The Library Assistant :

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The February General Meeting will be held at the Public Library, Manresa Road, Chelsea, S.W., on Wednesday, 15th February, at 7.30 p.m. The Chair will be taken by the President, Mr. J. D. Stewart, and there will be a discussion on the **Reconstruction Provisional Recommendations of the Committee**, as printed in this issue.

As these recommendations contain items that will completely alter the constitution of the Library Assistants' Association, the Council particularly desires that there shall be a large and representative attendance, and that many will contribute to the discussion. Branch Secretaries and others who are prevented from being present are invited to send an expression of opinion of the proposals to the Honorary Secretary, Public Library, Bancroft Road, Mile End, E., before the date of the meeting.

His Worship the Mayor of Chelsea will welcome the Association at 7.30 p.m., and light refreshments will be provided by Mr. Quinn at the conclusion of the meeting.

*Will those attending, kindly bring with them their copies of the recommendations?*

At this meeting the Certificate conferring the Honorary Fellowship of the Association on Mr. E. G. Rees in recognition of his continued services to the L.A.A. will be presented. It is hoped that a number of Mr. Rees' friends will attend the presentation to show their appreciation of his services and to wish him happiness in his well-earned rest.

**Junior Section.**—The third meeting of the Junior Section will be held in the above Library at 6.30 p.m. A short discussion will be opened by Miss E. M. Exley, of the Public Library, Plumstead, on "The Junior Section: what it is and what it may become." All Junior members are urged to attend and bring suggestions for future activities. The Council of the Association are supporting this new movement most heartily. In the hands of the younger members themselves lies the possibility of progress.

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### EDITORIAL.

**The Proposed Three-Day Meeting.**—Owing to the very feeble response to the notice printed in this Journal, the proposal to extend the Annual Meeting to a three-day affair has been abandoned. Full particulars of the Annual Meeting will appear in due course.

**Easter School.**—We have had several enquiries as to whether an Easter School will be held this year. The matter is in the hands of the Library Association, which body, it is hoped, will be able to adopt the suggestion of Dutch Librarians, and organise a trip to Holland, preferably at Easter. We hope to be able to make a definite announcement on the matter next month. Meanwhile, we shall be glad to receive the names of any who would like to take part in such a school.

**New Members.**—We are glad to print a fairly long list of new members this month, and especially to note the activity of the Midland Branch, which now numbers nearly a hundred members. We are also glad to welcome five members of the staff of the Science Museum Library, South Kensington. The addition to our membership of assistants in special libraries cannot fail to be mutually profitable, and we hope that others will also join our ranks.

In order to stimulate enthusiasm, the Council has decided that any associate (*i.e.* of 18 or under) who secures five recruits within twelve months shall have his or her subscription returned for that year.

**The David Copperfield Library.**—We are glad to see that the David Copperfield Library for Children of which so much has been heard, continues to excite interest not only in this country, but in the United States. The New York Public Library is sending by Miss Marie Shedlock, the well-known story-teller, six panels in crayon, wherewith to decorate the room. They are by Mr. Leslie Brooke, nephew of the late Stopford Brooke. Two of them illustrate "The Babes in the Wood"

and "Puss in Boots," and four the children of India, China, Canada and Russia. Some of us have been particularly interested as to who is to be the Librarian, and we now learn from the *Morning Post* that an appointment has not yet been made, but that applications need not be made for the position as "the problem is likely to be solved on original lines, of which it is a little premature yet to write."

**The Rural Library Movement.**—We are afraid that the Rural Library Movement is not going to be the success that some of us had hoped it would. It appears to be degenerating into a mere organisation for the distribution of boxes of books, the principal characteristic of which is that they are "cheap." Indeed, the too frequent use of this word is likely to prove the downfall of what promised to be one of the finest adult education movements conceived for many years. We are confirmed in this opinion by reading a report of the Cambridge-shire Education Committee on the provision of a county library. In the first place we emphatically disagree with the suggestion to appoint a full-time librarian at £300 a year "*either in the third or fourth year*" of the library's existence. Surely, if a trained librarian is of any value at all it is at the very initial stages of the library's existence rather than when the thing has been working for three or more years. In the report before us the Carnegie Trustees are credited with saying that a whole-time librarian must be appointed *when the scheme has got fully into working order*. Surely the Carnegie Trustees have had sufficient experience in the founding of libraries to know that this is likely to prove fatal to the success of any scheme. Then we are told that "the whole expense of the scheme when in full working order would be just about £400, £300 for salary and £100 for carriage and maintenance." In justification of this apparent extravagance, one speaker ventured to think that "the way to look at this expense was to consider that for the sum of £400 a year they would be able to get a really good county library into every village in the county." It is hoped that the £400 will not all have to be defrayed out of the rates, but that grants will be forthcoming from the Board of Education and the Minister of Agriculture. Apparently the County Council already spends £250 a year on the maintenance of School Libraries, but by substituting the county library scheme this expenditure will be reduced by £150 a year. We shall watch the working of this scheme with interest. Our own opinion is that it cannot be done at the price.

**Examinations.**—We note from the current *Record* that in future candidates are required to enter for the Library Association's Examinations on specially printed forms, copies of which

may be had on application. With the form, duly filled in, must be sent two stamped addressed envelopes. In one of these the candidate will receive a card of admission, and in the other the result of the Examination so far as the candidate is concerned. Examinations in the advanced courses will be conducted in June if not less than four entries are received for each subject.

The topics for the essays, so far as they have been chosen are :—

Section 1. Rise and decline of the 3-volume novel.

„ 3. History and development of systematic classification in British Public Libraries.

„ 4. How would you render the contents of a General Reference Library, containing 100,000 volumes, most easily accessible to the public? Describe the catalogue or handlists (or both) which you would advise, and include a discussion of the practicability, and desirability, of providing a printed catalogue (complete or in part) for such a collection.

„ 6. Periodicals in a library: their selection, purchase, display, disposal, etc., and their service value during and after currency.

**The Last Word in Open Access.**—Some of us enjoyed the privilege of inspecting the Great Smith Street (Westminster) Library last month, which has been completely reorganised as an open-access library. It comprises a lending library, a reference library, and a children's room. The fittings and lighting arrangements are all of the latest and most approved types, and a special feature of the lending library is the public gallery in which is stored a considerable portion of the library's stock. We congratulate Mr. Pacy on the results he has obtained, and commend the library to the attention of those who are interested in modern library planning. It is not yet open to the public.

**Authors and Public Libraries.**—In view of the many references—some of them quite misleading—that have been made to public libraries lately by authors of repute, in the press and in public meeting, we are glad to give prominence to the remark of Mr. Hugh Walpole at the last meeting of the Library Association to the effect that there should be much closer co-operation between the publisher, the bookseller, the author and the librarian. He said that in the whole matter of libraries, authors and publishers could co-operate better if they knew more. The author should be urged to come to the libraries more than he did. At present we all seemed to be working in separate compartments to the same end. In the past year he had had the chance of meeting representatives of different branches of literature, and as a consequence his own views on some things had changed. Referring to his visit to America, Mr. Walpole said that whenever he visited a town to lecture,

one of the first places to which he was taken was the library. In almost every town over there the library might be described as a hub of the universe. He commended the arrangements made for the exhibition of recent books, the notice screens devoted to cuttings, reviews, portraits of authors, particulars of anniversaries, etc., the provision of little rooms devoted to special subjects, and the organisation of lectures.

**No Future at Twenty-Five.**—Judging from the number of remarks we have heard, our Editorial on this subject has created considerable discussion amongst assistants. We notice that *The Library World* regrets to know that we consider the statement cruel, and proceeds to "ask any member of the L.A.A. Council if he would give an important appointment to any candidate whose sole claim was that 'he had served for ten years' in this or that library." Of course he would not. But our contention is that an assistant ought not to be allowed merely "*to serve*" for ten years without qualifying. If he does not show signs of doing this within a year, his chief has a moral duty both to that assistant and to the profession, either to see that he *does* qualify or that he seeks another field of employment. It is far less cruel to do this than to allow him to drift on until he is 25 and then to tell him that he has no future in library work. Another aspect of the matter is referred to by a correspondent on page 32.

**The Roll of Honour.**—Circulars have been sent to all known public and private libraries within the British Empire, requesting particulars of those who served in His Majesty's Forces during the European War, especially of those who fell. The circulars were called for return by 31st January in the case of libraries within the British Isles, and by 31st March in other cases. May we appeal for the co-operation of librarians and others in making the record as complete as possible? The editorial work has been entrusted to the Secretary of the Library Association and the Honorary Editor of this Journal.

**Examination Results.**—We notice that at its last meeting, our Midland Branch (which, by the way, is to be warmly congratulated on its growth and vitality) passed a Resolution urging the earlier publication of the Library Association's Examinations results. We are in a position to say that this matter had already received the serious attention of the Education Committee of that body, and that as a consequence, students will have little cause for complaint on this score in future. The results of the December examinations will be known, we believe, by the time this issue appears.

**Mr. A. W. Pollard.**—We were pleased to note amongst the New Year's Honours the name of Mr. A. W. Pollard, Keeper of Printed Books at the British Museum, and take this opportunity of congratulating him upon receiving the C.B.

**Next Council Meeting.**—The next meeting of the L.A.A. Council will be held at the National Library for the Blind, on Wednesday, 22nd February, at 7.0 p.m.

**A Memorial to the Late Henry P. N. Dixon.**—A brief but impressive ceremony took place in the Technical Library of Saint Bride Foundation Institute on the 25th ult. The occasion was the unveiling by Percy Squire, Esq., Chairman of the Governing Board, of a tablet in memory of Lieut. Henry P. N. Dixon, late chief assistant in the Technical Library. Almost immediately after the outbreak of war, Mr. Dixon joined the 24th London Regiment, "Queens," and soon saw active service in France, where he attained the rank of sergeant. In 1916 he entered a cadet school, gained his commission, and was gazetted to the Northumberland Fusiliers. He was last seen on September 2nd, 1917, going over the top at the head of his platoon, on which day he was wounded, and died in the hands of the enemy two days later. Mr. Dixon received his professional training in the Croydon Public Libraries, and was appointed at Saint Bride's in 1913. He was a man of exceptional merit and ability and one whom the profession could ill afford to lose. The tablet, which was unveiled in the presence of the Governors and the staff of the Institute, was the work of Messrs. Swain & Son, Ltd. The proceedings closed with a brief address and prayer by the Rev. A. Taylor, Vicar of Saint Bride's.—W. T. B.

**Subscriptions.**—The Hon. General Treasurer will be glad if the Honorary Treasurers of Branches will kindly remit to him as early as possible any sums they may have in hand, due to the Parent Association.

**Benevolent Fund.**—The Council gratefully acknowledges the following donation:—Miss Monica Cant, 10s. 0d.

### PROVISIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE RECONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE.

With a view to facilitating discussion at the February meeting on the future organization of the L.A.A., we print below the provisional recommendations of the Reconstruction Committee.

- (1) The word Branch to be abolished and Division substituted therefor.

- (2) The existing Branches to continue geographically as at present, but to be known as Divisions. The United Kingdom to be gradually mapped out into Divisions, as geographical and other circumstances demand and permit. London to be a Division, and its area to be identical with the Metropolitan Police Area.
- (3) The National Council to be elected annually, to consist of the Officers of the Association, and representatives to be elected from (and by) each Division upon a basis of—over 25 members and under 50 members, 1 representative; over 50 members and under 75 members, 2 representatives; over 75 members and under 125 members, 3 representatives; over 125 members, 4 representatives—which is be the maximum number of representatives from any one Division.
- (4) The Council to meet at least four times a year; and at the various big towns in rotation. Travelling expenses of Divisional Representatives to be defrayed from the funds of the Division which they represent. Travelling expenses of the Association's Officers to be defrayed from the general funds of the Association.
- (5) The Council to deal with the policy of the Association as a whole; and National business as apart from Divisional domestic affairs, *i.e.*, Journal; Annual and Special General Meetings; matters concerning conditions of service, salaries, etc.; all matters referred to it by the Divisional Committees. Members of the Council to receive agendas of the Council Meeting at least two weeks before each meeting, to enable them to meet, exchange views and send in written proposals, etc.
- (6) The Council decides policy of Journal, but the Editor what shall be published.
- (7) Officers of the Association (President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, Editor) to be elected annually, by ballot. President and Vice-President to be selected from and by the Divisions in rotation, according to seniority of establishment of existing (and future) Divisions. No one Division may elect both these Officers in the same year of office.
- (8) Honorary Editor preferably always a London Division man.
- (9) Divisions to elect their own Committees and arrange for control of their own domestic and internal affairs.
- (10) The method of recording the votes at the Annual Meeting to be as follows: Agendas for Annual Meeting to be distributed to each Divisional Secretary one month prior to the meeting in order that each Division may hold a preliminary meeting, discuss and consider the items, and in

cases of dispute, a vote to be taken, the exact result of, and number of which (*pro* and *con*) to be forwarded to the General Secretary in time for the Annual Meeting. All votes thus recorded will be added to the vote (if any) actually taken at the Annual Meeting.

- (11) Each Division to pay to the National Treasurer, yearly, a sum equal to 6s. per head of its total membership. A local subscription to be levied according to local needs, to be expended on local requirements.

### LIBRARY FINANCE.\*

BY J. H. MCCALL, F.S.A.A., *Borough Accountant, County Borough of Croydon.*

When your Editor asked me if I would read a paper to this Association, I naturally inferred that he had in his mind the subject of library finance. It is a common error to suppose that librarians are so exclusively devoted to a department whose chief characteristic is educational, that questions of finance are foreign to them. I think I will convince you that finance has very much to do with the library movement, and that the success or otherwise of a librarian is largely dependent upon his ability as a financial administrator.

The history of library finance can give the only explanation for the curious position of affairs as they exist in England to-day. It is my habit to look for a library in every fresh town that I visit, and I have found a very puzzling state of affairs which it would be hard to explain to anyone visiting England for the first time. Some libraries are inconveniently tucked away in back streets, and curiously enough, in many cases, although the surroundings are uninviting, the building itself is imposing enough and seems to deserve a better locality. In some instances I have found these beautiful buildings almost filled with museum specimens instead of books. I have asked for certain books which one might expect to find in any moderately equipped library, and in some cases have been told that they have never had them. A stranger might think that it would have been better to have spent less on the fabric of the building, and a little more on furnishing the shelves with useful literature, but to those who know, the explanation is to be found in the history of the library movement.

I do not know who were the pioneers who succeeded in getting the Public Libraries Acts passed, but on examination of the financial conditions attaching thereto, one is tempted to

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\* Paper read at the Monthly Meeting of the L.A.A., 11th January, 1922.



wonder whether the primary object they wished to attain was educational or otherwise. I do not suppose there is a single statute in existence which can really compare with the Public Libraries Act of 1892, with its generous designs and intentions which are rendered practically ineffective by the stringent financial regulations affecting the operations of the Act.

(1) *The Public Libraries Act, 1892.*—In the first place, you will notice that this Act is an adoptive one, that is, it is left to the Council of the Local Authority to exercise its wisdom by resolving to adopt the Act after, no doubt, carefully considering whether the inhabitants of their particular locality would be benefited or otherwise. In the opinion of many, it is difficult to understand how any representatives of the ratepayers can refuse to provide a library for them. Its popularity, if properly managed, is unquestioned, as is evidenced by the statistics which are prepared by the librarians of this country.

To some men a public library is more important than a public elementary school as an educational factor. It can be argued, no doubt, that if the object of education is to produce character, then the reading of books which are freely chosen because they are liked is a greater factor than the drilling in elementary education which the scholars do not like: if this is so, then much can be said for the library movement, and a great responsibility rests upon the librarians in providing healthy and suitable literature, and in addition, it might be an argument for the compulsory provision of libraries in every place of a certain size.

In the second place, you will notice that the Act is very generous in its intentions. The provision of public libraries may be extended to include museums, gymnasias, art galleries and such like things. There are abundant provisions for acquiring and holding property to carry out the duties of a Library Authority: but we notice that, having elaborated somewhat in this style, we are told the Library Authority may receive land by way of gift, and this brings us to the third consideration of the Act which has been so fatal in its adoption, *viz.*, the limitation of the amount which may be spent to the produce of a penny rate. If the intention of this restriction was to allay the fears of those who would have opposed its adoption, by guaranteeing that it would not cost the ratepayers more than a penny rate; that would also have the effect of restricting its adoption from another cause, *i.e.*, the futility of trying to establish and maintain a library with such a restricted income.

I should like to say here that where financial restrictions are made in terms of the produce of a penny rate, the financial soundness of the scheme may be questioned. As you are all aware, the rateable value of a locality has no relationship to the population. It would seem to me that limitation of expenditure to be fair and equitable to the people themselves, should be based on the amount per head of population to be expended. I should think that the financial troubles of librarians in the past have been mainly due to a low rateable value of the local authority who genuinely desired to provide an adequate library.

Many authorities took advantage of the generosity of Mr. Andrew Carnegie, who freely paid for the cost of the buildings, subject to certain conditions. Hence the result mentioned earlier as being somewhat puzzling to a stranger. Good buildings on indifferent sites, in unsuitable positions, with the library limited to the extent of what might be possible in the product of a penny rate. It was thought by some that books would be freely given to the library, but you probably know better than I do the extent and value of such gifts.

(2) *The Public Libraries Act, 1919*.—The rate restriction brought things to a critical head owing to the effect of war conditions on the cost of living and the cost of materials, books, etc., and the Act of 1919 was passed to remedy the serious state of affairs. Under this Act, local authorities are given power to spend any sum which they consider to be reasonable for library purposes. They may receive an estimate of expenditure and limit the amount to be raised to that estimate, or they may fix the amount to be raised for library purposes at so much in the pound. The Act also gives power to the Local Authority, which is also the Education Authority, to delegate its powers as a Library Committee to the Education Committee, thus making the statutory admission that libraries are in some way connected with education. It now becomes the duty of the librarian to so administer his department that the annual demands for library purposes should appeal to the members of the Council as reasonable.

*Libraries' Accounts*.—As you are all aware, separate accounts have to be kept of expenditure under the Libraries Acts, and it devolves upon the Financial Officer of the Corporation to see that all the requirements of the Acts are complied with. The accounts, however, of the Corporation are not very much good to the librarian if he had to depend upon them for the information he requires in order to administer his library efficiently. It is essential for him to know the exact

financial position of the libraries' accounts at any time, and as all accounts are certified by him before they are passed to the Committee of the Council for payment, he is in a position to keep such accounts that he may consider necessary. The method of compiling his information need not be very elaborate. The expenditure can be conveniently separated into Standing Charges, over which he has no control, and expenditure in respect of books, repairs, etc., which require careful scrutiny. I suggest a book containing columns for the necessary heads of expenditure would meet the requirements. I have said previously that the accounts kept by the Financial Officer of the Corporation are not of much use to the librarian in ascertaining how the money is being spent from time to time—for this reason: those accounts are only records of accounts paid or submitted to be paid, whereas the librarian himself should keep his records from the point where he has actually placed orders for books, etc. This information in connection with the expenditure of the library is required for two purposes:—

(a) When preparing the yearly or half-yearly estimate. In this connection it is wise to make the estimate as detailed as possible, and for the purpose of ascertaining what is to be spent in the new financial year, it is necessary to compile a return consisting of actual expenditure to date, to which is added the estimated expenditure for the balance of the current year to run. It makes very little difference whether the Library Committee is limited to the product of a rate, say a twopenny rate, or not; the estimate should be prepared in either case, and, in my opinion, the expenditure of the Library Committee should be subject to the same control as any other spending committee of the Council.

(b) In ascertaining periodically the progress of expenditure in relation to the estimates. It is a curious thing in library accounts that expenditure on the main object of the library, *vis.*, the provision of books, is the one which must suffer if other items of expenditure run beyond their estimates: and the practice is that if economies can be effected, then more money is available for the purchase of books; if extravagance occurs, then the fewer books. I dare say you will think it is not within my province to say so, but I venture to express the opinion that where there is a limited amount of money to be spent on books, the librarian must exercise some discretion in purchasing that class of literature for which there is the greatest demand, and if there is any section of the library which must suffer, it should be the Reference and not the Circulating Department.

*Verification of Accounts.*—All accounts, before they are passed to the Committee for payment, should be verified by the Chief Librarian personally, and I am particularly anxious to emphasise that this duty should not be delegated to an assistant. The certification should imply:—

- (1) That proper sanction has been obtained for placing the order.
- (2) The goods have been actually received in good condition; and
- (3) That prices and extensions have been verified.

If there is any duty to delegate to assistants, it should be, perhaps, the work in connection with the last-named. I should like to say here a word as to what ought to be done in connection with sundry purchases of books for which the sanction the Committee has not been obtained. It is not unusual for a librarian, when he sees the opportunity, to buy up batches of books at second-hand dealers. Where this is done, every such transaction should be reported fully to the next meeting of the Committee for its approval. All accounts, when duly certified as being correct, are forwarded to the Finance Department which, in due course, presents them to the Committee for their approval. No doubt there is something to be said from the librarian's standpoint for delaying the presentation of accounts to the Committee as long as possible, but, in my opinion, it is much better from the standpoint of efficiency to deal with the accounts of the library monthly as in the case of every other spending committee.

*(To be continued.)*

## PROCEEDINGS.

The January General Meeting was held at Croydon on Wednesday, 11th January. At 3.0 p.m., Mr. Councillor J. O. Pelton, J.P., Chairman of the Croydon Libraries Committee, conducted a party of about forty members and friends round the ancient Whitgift Hospital, founded in 1596 by Archbishop Whitgift for the benefit of 12 aged persons from Lambeth, and 12 from Croydon. Mr. Pelton outlined the history of the hospital, of the town, the church, and of the ancient Archiepiscopal Palace.

Tea was provided at the Central Library by the Staff Guild, after which those present were conducted round the various departments of the library, and some of the methods in operation were explained.

At 6.30, the Juniors met in the Junior Library, and a paper was read by Gwendolen Siggs, describing some of the unique features of that department. She drew attention to the fact that the department was in charge of a specially trained staff who devoted the whole of their time to the work, to the large amount of volunteer work done by the children themselves, to the story-telling and lecture work, etc.

The Chair was taken at 7.30 by Mr. Councillor Pelton, who extended to the Association a cordial welcome to Croydon. The Minutes of the December meeting were read and confirmed.

In accordance with the notice given in the December number of *The Library Assistant* the vacancy on the non-London side of the Council, caused by the retirement of Mr. F. W. C. Pepper, was filled by the election of Mr. Patrick, Chairman of the Midland Branch of the Association.

The Chairman then called upon Mr. J. H. McCall, F.S.A.A., the Borough Accountant of Croydon, to read his paper on "Library Finance," as printed in the present issue. There was, afterwards, a very fair discussion.

#### MIDLAND BRANCH.

The Midland Branch held a highly successful meeting at Coventry on 30th November, forty-two members being present. The party assembled at the Warwick Road entrance to Coventry Railway Station and were conveyed by a private motor 'bus to Earlsdon Branch Library. The library was keenly inspected and the arrangements much admired. After inspecting the library, the party were conveyed to St. Mary's Hall. Members were conducted through the Hall under the expert guidance of Mr. McKnight, the curator.

His Worship the Mayor of Coventry (Alderman W. H. Grant) then graciously received the members and invited them to tea. His Worship, in an extremely interesting and happy speech, recorded his appreciation of the public library movement and the value of our organization to stimulate professional interest and add to the amenities of life. The Chairman and Mr. Woodbine responded, paying tribute to his Worship's kindly reception of the Branch and expressing the appreciation of the Branch of his wide outlook on professional matters. His Worship then conducted the party to the new Council House buildings and from the dais he described the main features of the new building and referred with pride to the decoration, all of which is symbolic of the past history of the City. Alderman Grant was largely responsible for this innovation in civic architecture, and stated that the idea was engendered by John Ruskin's "Seven Lamps of Architecture" which he read as a youth. He gave the quotation "Better the rudest work that tells a story or records a fact, than the richest without meaning. There should not be a single ornament put upon great civic buildings without some intellectual intention."

The evening meeting was held at the Gulson (Central) Library. The minutes of the last meeting were read, confirmed and signed. Votes of congratulation were unanimously accorded the undermentioned members on their recent appointments and professional advancement.—Mr. F. W. C. Pepper (Birmingham), appointed Librarian of Winchester; Mr. G. C. Poole (Smethwick), appointed to the staff of the Cardiff Public Libraries.

Six members and twenty-three associates were elected to membership of the Association. The names are printed elsewhere in this issue.

It was moved by Mr. Woodbine, seconded by Mr. Hunt, and Resolved

That the Secretary of the Midland Branch of the L.A.A. (representing 92 members and associates) be instructed to write the Secretary of the Library Association requesting that steps be taken to announce the results of all examinations of the Library Association not later than the 25th of the month following that in which any examination is held. Also, the Secretary of the Midland Branch be instructed to write other branches of the L.A.A. suggesting that they take similar action.

Mr. F. Barlow, of Coventry, then read his paper "Is Public Library Administration based on a misconception?" Mr. Barlow's paper was well

received and aroused keen interest. He contended that public library administration had tended very largely to attract the least desirable sections of the public and by the very presence of these people within the library the better element of the public were discouraged. Newsrooms were held to be places where loafers lounge and shelter from the weather, rather than places of enlightenment. The remedy advocated was a closer and keener supervision of the public who use a library and power to refuse the casual reader or flippant borrower.

An excellent discussion followed and was contributed to by Mr. E. A. Savage, Librarian of Coventry, who kindly accepted the invitation to the meeting, Misses E. D. Maddocks, D. Procter, and E. Weston, Messrs. L. Chubb, D. C. Jones, J. Sidwell, and H. Woodbine. Mr. Barlow's views were not accepted in their entirety. Whilst it was admitted the library attracted a certain element which we would prefer not to see, it would be a difficult and dangerous step to endeavour to classify the public. The existence of the reader who treats the value of a public library lightly is the product of our social conditions, and is very largely due to the lack of ultimate success in past efforts of public education.

Votes of thanks were accorded Mr. E. A. Savage and Mr. J. Sidwell for the excellent programme and arrangements of the meeting and to Mr. F. Barlow for his critical paper, which succeeded in arousing a good discussion.

#### MIDLAND BRANCH.—NEW MEMBERS.

**Members:** Misses L. GAY, E. V. HOLDER, and W. F. HOULSTON, Birmingham; Messrs. T. H. ASTON, Wolverhampton; T. LOVEROCK, Birmingham; and H. J. ROBERTSON, Smethwick.

**Associates:** Misses I. BAKER, L. CHEDHAM, A. CRUMPTON, F. HINLEY, E. JUKES, C. MOSS, D. H. NICHOLLS, F. M. OWEN, M. E. OWEN, L. D. PANE, Birmingham; Misses W. O. PHIPPS, Smethwick; E. RICHARDSON, Birmingham; H. ROBINS, Smethwick; O. RYDER, Birmingham; J. SANDLAND, Birmingham; E. SHAKESPEARE, Leamington; E. TIMMS, Birmingham; F. TOONE, Leamington; D. M. TREVELYAN, Birmingham; F. UNDERHILL, Leamington; N. N. UNDERHILL, Warwickshire Rural; V. WATTS-READ, Birmingham; and E. WEBSTER, Birmingham.

#### NORTH-WESTERN BRANCH.—LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT DIVISION.

The next General Meeting will be held at the Free Church Centre, Arcade Buildings (Fourth Floor), Lord Street, Liverpool, on Friday, 10th February, at 7.30 p.m. The Chair will be taken by Mr. E. C. Wickens, Vice-President, L.A.A. (Reference Library, Liverpool). A Divisional Council Meeting will be held at 6.45 p.m.

A symposium is being arranged on the alluring question of "What you would do if you were a chief librarian." So look around your library. Consider the methods in force now. Think how those methods could be improved on. Ask yourself how you would have them done—if you were the chief librarian.

Then write out, quite briefly, your *brightest* idea—no matter what it is, so long as it suggests a practical improvement. You will, of course, treat the matter sensibly—not necessarily laboriously; be witty if you wish—but please don't say you would double salaries and halve hours, because you know you wouldn't! And you might raise false hopes.

A prize will be awarded to the contributor of the best idea, the onerous decision to be made by the members present at the meeting. Ideas, bearing an assumed name, should reach the Hon. Secretary, J. T. Evans, Reference Library, Liverpool, not later than Wednesday, February 8th.

Just *one* idea, remember! It's not much to ask—not when you consider the way we *talk* about what we would do—if we were chief librarians.

J. T. E.

## OUR LIBRARY.

INDIA. BARODA STATE LIBRARIES. DUTT, N. M. Handbook of the Baroda Library Department. 40 pp. 8½ in. by 5½ in. 1921. (Wrappers).

An interesting account of the origin and development of the Baroda State Library movement from the time of its inception in 1910. His Highness the Maharaja Gaekwar was the pioneer of the public library movement in India, and the success that has attended the experiment is evidenced in this pamphlet. The nucleus of the Central Library comprised the Maharaja's own private library of 20,000 volumes, and it now consists of nearly 90,000 volumes. The library system, which is administered on the most progressive lines, caters for all classes and creeds, and by means of travelling libraries the people in the outlying villages are also reached. Besides the ordinary reference and circulating work a speciality is made of work for children. There are books in English and in the vernacular, there is a playroom for the younger children, and games, entertainments, cinema shows, story hours, etc., are also provided. We congratulate His Highness and Mr. Dutt on the high state of efficiency which the Baroda State Libraries have attained to, and commend the pamphlet to the notice of all who are interested in the progress of librarianship.

## METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF HACKNEY.

### APPOINTMENT OF MALE SENIOR ASSISTANT IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES.

The Borough Council invite applications for the above appointment, which, under the Council's scale, is a Class 4 position, at a commencing salary of £220 per annum. The maximum salary of the Class is £300 per annum.

The salary, which is payable monthly, is subject to review as the Board of Trade index figure of the cost of living falls below 100 per cent. above pre-war level. The salary is also subject to a percentage deduction in accordance with the provisions of the Council's Superannuation Act, 1908.

Applicants for the position must have had practical experience in a systematically classified library.

The appointment will be held during the pleasure of the Council, subject to one month's notice on either side.

The person appointed will be required to pass satisfactorily a medical examination within 14 days of appointment and before entering upon the duties.

Applications in candidates' own handwriting must be made on printed forms to be obtained from the undersigned on receipt of a stamped addressed foolscap envelope, and be accompanied by copies of not more than three testimonials of recent date.

Applications must be endorsed "Senior Male Assistant" and delivered to the undersigned not later than 5 o'clock p.m. on Monday, the 13th February, 1922.

Canvassing members of the Council, directly or indirectly, is strictly prohibited, and will be deemed a disqualification.

R. H. R. TEE,  
Town Clerk.

Town Hall, Hackney, E.8.  
16th January, 1922.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editor of "The Library Assistant."

19th January, 1922.

SIR,—Last month you gave currency to a statement in the "Library World," to the effect that most library assistants under 25 have no future. Is it not true to say that most librarians of 30 have no future?

The young librarian who is well equipped will obtain, with more or less ease, a position with a salary between £250 and £350 a year. If he is earning the latter figure at thirty he will not complain of ill-usage. It is the next step that is difficult. He will soon find that towns offering £350—£450 a year want men about forty, that such vacancies occur only once in a proverbial blue moon, and that however many diplomas he may possess, he cannot obtain a post if there is no post to obtain.

Is it not a question whether library committees, library school authorities, and chief librarians, have any moral right to encourage young people to enter a profession which will break the hearts of eighty per cent. of them by the time they are middle-aged?

If the aforesaid gentlemen have not the said moral right, then by what means is the number of entrants to be regulated?

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,  
OBSERVER.

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NEW MEMBERS.

WILLIAM CLARK, R. L. HILL, A. E. MORRIS, ALBERT WESTON, and W. J. WILLIAMS (all of the Science Museum Library, S. Kensington); HILDA A. DYMCK (Ealing). F. S. ENGALL is of St. Pancras, not of Hornsey as printed last month.

**Midland Branch:** See separate list on page 30.

**N.W. Branch, Liverpool Division:** Misses M. BACKHOUSE, E. G. SHEPHERD and A. YATES (Liverpool); Misses A. HUDSON (Ellesmere Port); and M. I. THOMAS (Bootle); Messrs. F. SPENDER and J. B. STEPHENS (Liverpool).

**Associates:** Misses M. L. ALEXANDER, E. ARCHIBALD, W. PUGH and W. WALKER (Liverpool).

**Yorkshire Branch:** Miss BROOKE (Mechanics' Institute, Bradford); F. SMITH (Leeds).

[Subscriptions, if not already paid, should be forwarded to the Honorary General Treasurer, Mr. J. F. Hogg, Central Library, Lavender Hill, S.W.11. Branch members will please remit to their Branch Treasurers.]

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APPOINTMENTS.

NEWTON M. DUTT, state librarian and reader to His Highness the Maharaja Gaekwad, to be curator of libraries, Baroda State, India, *vice* J. S. Kudalkar, M.A., LL.B., deceased.